

# UNDERSTANDING: TYPE 2 PTSD

## TYPE I OR TYPE II PTSD?

What? So there are two different types of PTSD? Believe it or not, yes there are; and in fact there are a number of different trauma conditions beyond these. So what's the difference?

Whereas Type 1 PTSD can develop after a single incident, Type 2 PTSD commonly develops after a long series of traumas such as child abuse, domestic abuse, war and terrorism. Due to the long standing nature of these traumas a person tends to experience significant changes in their personality, how they see themselves, the world, and others around them.

Just like with Type 1 PTSD, all of the symptoms of Type 2 PTSD, at least at one time, served a very important function. (For more information on this see the article for Type 1 PTSD.) In other words, the person developed some of the most effective adaptations to very difficult situations, demonstrating just how resilient they are.

**“DOES THIS MEAN I’M CRAZY, BECAUSE THAT’S WHAT PEOPLE TELL ME?”**

No, No, No and No, it does not mean you're crazy. Sometimes you may feel crazy because your mind and body seem to have a “mind of their own,” causing you to feel out of control at times. Other times you may find yourself experiencing intense emotional fluctuations. You know what, that's all part of the complex adaptation to the traumatic experience.

So what are the symptoms of Type 2 PTSD?  
Let's take a look:

- 1. Emotional Regulation Dysfunction**
  - Affective Dysregulation
  - Modulation of anger
  - Self-Destructive behaviors
  - Suicidal preoccupation
  - Problems modulating sexual activity
  - Excessive Risk Taking
- 2. Alterations in Attention or Consciousness**
  - Amnesia
  - Transient Dissociative Episodes & Depersonalization
- 3. Disturbance in Relational Capacities**
  - Alteration in perception of self
  - Ineffectiveness
  - Feeling permanently damaged
  - Guilt and responsibility
  - Shame
  - Belief that nobody can understand
  - Minimizing the traumatic experience
- 4. Alterations in relations to others**
  - Inability to trust
  - Re-victimization
  - Victimizing Others
- 5. Alterations in the perception of abuser**
  - Idealization of abuser
  - Rationalizing abusers actions
- 6. Somatic Distress and Disorganization**
  - Problems with digestive system
  - Chronic Pain
  - Cardiopulmonary Symptoms
  - Conversion Symptoms
  - Sexual Symptoms
- 7. Adversely Affected Belief System**
  - Despair and Hopelessness
  - Loss of previously sustaining beliefs

Figure 1: Diagnostic criteria modified from Herman (1992); Luxenberg, et al. (2001) & Cloitre, et al. (2012)